Traffic congestion cause for concern

> Penang rep fears undersea tunnel, reclamation projects will worsen jams

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GEORGE TOWN: Pulau Tikus assemblyman Yap Soo Huey has raised concerns over a possible worsening of traffic congestion in Gurney Drive, Tanjung Tokong and Pulau Tikus following the state government plans to reclaim 360ha off the Pesiarian Gurney coast and the proposed undersea tunnel project from Gurney to Bagan Ajam.

The reclamation under the Sri Tanjung Pinang II (STPII) project is expected to increase the population by 202,500 and an additional 11,000 to 14,000 cars according to the Detailed Environment Impact Assessment (DEIA) report,” Yap said in a press conference yesterday.

The massive reclaimed kidney-shaped island is targeted to have 12,000 new residential units in addition to commercial and retail development.

STPII is reported to have a gross development value (GDV) of RM25 billion.

She urged the state to focus on improving the pedestrian facilities and public transport to cater to any traffic increase.

The tunnel is part of an ambitious RM6.3 billion traffic improvement plan by the state government and includes three highways encompassing Gurney Drive, the Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Expressway, Bandar Baru Air Itam, Tanjung Bungah and Teluk Bahang, which will be financed via land-swap.

Yap said the administration could use the same financial arrangement to fund pedestrian friendly infrastructure and establish capital for alternative public transport systems like trams.

“There is no reason for Putrajaya to reject an application from the state (to run their own public transport) if the state has sufficient funds to do so,” she said when reporters pointed out public transport was a federal matter.